PHENOMENOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS: REFLECTIONS IN REFERENCE TO THE BOOK OF ALPHONSE DE WAELHENS, SCHIZOPHRENIA*

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On an occasion like this, a discourse on psychosis first of all prolongs the intention which animated Alphonse De Waelhens when, after about thirty years of work in philosophy, he crossed over into another domain which he nevertheless intended to explore as a philosopher. This means that I am essentially going to think along with De Waelhens on psychosis and raise questions whenever I think it difficult to think like him. In this manner, I am going to continue with him the numerous conversations and discussions we had both before and after the publication of his book. For his writing remains for us the today of his thought which summons us and calls us together, all the more vividly for those of us who so often listened to him and who can hear in his writing the style of his words and the cadence of his voice.

In the book Schizophrenia, there is an affirmation which I would immediately like to accentuate, an affirmation which must have been an important one for the author since it is found in his foreword and in his conclusion. Thus framing his whole work, this affirmation is meant to make its perspective explicit. The author affirms that he will show that a philosophical anthropology cannot be constituted without the help of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. One wonders whether the readers of this brief introductory and concluding statement take notice of it and, if they do, how they understand it. For it does not seem to be self evident.

The final chapter, which is the properly philosophical part of the book, is significantly entitled "Existential Elucidation of the Unconscious and of Psychosis," for this chapter does more to allow psychiatry and psychoanalysis to benefit from phenomenological analyses than to

renew phenomenology through the contributions made by psychiatry and psychoanalysis. In view of our topic, which is that of "phenomenology and psychoanalysis," this paradox calls for some reflection. I will not pretend to completely elucidate this paradox, but I think I can clarify it a bit by recalling the conception of philosophy that De Waelhens expounded in his most personal philosophical work, on philosophy and natural experience: *La philosophie et les expériences naturelles* (1961). "Philosophy," he wrote "is reflection upon non-philosophical experience. For indeed philosophy is both akin to, yet alien, to non-philosophical experience; for while it manages to make the latter aware of itself as non-philosophical, it thereby sometimes allows natural experience to set itself up as an explicit rival of philosophy. Correlatively, non-philosophical experience is close enough to philosophy for it to find a hearing in philosophy, to disquiet it, and thereby to transform it as philosophy" (De Waelhens, 1961). And further on, De Waelhens proposes, "thus, the task of philosophy is to comprehend, by contact with human experience and with its history, the rationality that man progressively and interminably institutes in his very existence, in his sensitivity, in his relations with others, in his reflection on himself, on things and their transformation, in the process of his community life, in political activity, in contemplation or aesthetic creation, and finally in religious faith" (De Waelhens, 1961). Or again, "The world, as constitutive of the non-philosophical experience which philosophy must elaborate, achieves its meaning in language, which is not explicitly philosophical yet from which philosophical language is inseparable, because man is inseparable from it, since man is language" (De Waelhens, 1961). It is this very conception of philosophy that De Waelhens implemented in his study on psychosis. What is of interest in experience and in psychoanalytic theory is to comprehend the rationality that humanity progressively and incessantly institutes from the prehistory of its existence. This means in particular comprehending how the human person, taken up in language, through those events which are existentially first, becomes what he is by definition: subject of the speech act. The author's project can be understood in this way as the project of showing that a philosophical anthropology cannot be constituted without the help of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. Indeed, psychoanalysis deals with non-philosophical experience, experience at once the most heterogeneous to philosophy, and which is moreover not even natural because, in the process of rememoration, it reawakens a history which precedes all natural experience. Yet, at the same time, this experience has the greatest affinity with philosophy since it has to do with the very advent of